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Wednesday, 24 April 1996, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral . . . . . (Portugal)

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Agenda item 44 (*continued*)

The situation in the Middle East

Draft resolution (A/50/L.70)

Mr. Hamdoon (Iraq) (*interpretation from Arabic*): For the past 15 days Lebanon has been the target of widespread Israeli aggression carried out under the flimsiest of pretexts. This aggression has so far resulted in the deaths of some 200 people, the wounding of hundreds more and the displacement of over 500,000 Lebanese nationals. It has also caused substantial damage to Lebanon's economic infrastructure and historic sites.

This aggression, covering the entire territory of Lebanon, is a flagrant violation of that country's sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence and of the United Nations Charter and the principles of international law and international humanitarian law. It also constitutes a serious threat to the security of the region and defiance of the United Nations in its role in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Since the Israeli onslaught of 10 April 1996, the Security Council has been ineffective, because it applies policies involving double standards, whose existence no one can continue to deny. Given the Council's inaction in the face of massive aggression against an Arab State, the Arab Group at the United Nations submitted to it a draft resolution condemning the Israeli aggression, demanding that it cease and requesting that Lebanon be compensated appropriately. This draft resolution called on Israel to implement all relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 425 (1978), immediately to withdraw its forces from Lebanese territory and to respect the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognized boundaries. The provisions of the draft Arab resolution represented a balanced, legitimate and fair response to the ongoing aggression.

We deeply regret that the Security Council did not adopt that draft resolution. Instead, on 18 April, it adopted a toothless alternative that fails to condemn the aggression, to call for the withdrawal of the forces of aggression or to require the payment of compensation. That resolution, resolution 1052 (1996), merely called on all parties to cease all hostilities forthwith.

This ineffective text was adopted against the backdrop of the Israeli massacre in Qana, committed that very morning. The charred bodies there recalled the massacre at the Al-Amriyah civilian shelter in Baghdad when it was bombed by the United States Air Force, resulting in the deaths of 400 women and children. That massacre, too, failed to stir the Security Council's conscience.

As it did not measure up to the gravity of the Israeli aggression, resolution 1052 (1996) did not put an immediate end to the military operations. At this very

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moment the Israeli aggressors are pursuing their mass destruction of Lebanon. Civilians are targeted and chased from their homes. Lebanon's economic infrastructure — its water treatment plants, power plants, roads, bridges, farmland, villages and houses of worship — is also being targeted. The Israelis thus follow the example of their ally, which sought to bomb Iraq back to the Stone Age.

In view of the Security Council's failure to deter the aggression and put an end to the hostilities, and given the growing global concern over these Israeli acts of aggression, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of the Islamic Conference requested the Secretary-General to convene this resumed session of the General Assembly in order to highlight the gravity of the situation and the world Organization's responsibility for bringing an end to the aggression, restoring Lebanon's rights and implementing United Nations resolutions, especially Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which calls on Israel to withdraw from Lebanese territory. The Security Council has continuously failed to implement that resolution over the past 18 years, despite the fact that it is empowered to impose sanctions under Chapter VII of the Charter.

This resumed session of the General Assembly has historic significance, representing as it does the desire of the entire international community, represented by the Members of the United Nations, to bring an immediate end to the Israeli aggression. It is also a positive indication of the ability of the General Assembly, the highest deliberative body within the United Nations system, to exercise the powers vested in it by the Charter in regard to the maintenance of international peace and security, as provided for in Articles 10, 11 and 14.

On the other hand, the convening of this session has underscored the severity of the Security Council's credibility problem. The fact that the majority of States Members of the United Nations has called for this session to be convened, following the inscription of this matter on the Security Council's agenda and the adoption of resolution 1052 (1996), confirms that this majority is unhappy with the Security Council's approach to this issue. In other words, the Security Council has not demonstrated credibility in fulfilling the mandate the Member States gave it under Article 24 of the Charter to act on behalf of the entire membership. The General Assembly has an opportunity to play its full role as the true representative of the common will of the international community and to shoulder its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The horrendous nature of Israel's systematic, continuing aggression requires the General Assembly to react appropriately by adopting a resolution condemning the aggression and calling for its immediate cessation. It should call on the aggressor to withdraw from all Lebanese territory and to compensate that country for the devastation of its economy. The adoption and follow-up of such a resolution would discourage Israel's tendency to commit such aggression and would send a message of solidarity from the international community to the suffering people of Lebanon. It would also be an appropriate lesson for the Security Council and lead it to renounce its policy of double standards.

Mr. Al-Ni'mah (Qatar) (*interpretation from Arabic*): At the outset, on behalf of my country, I wish to welcome His Excellency President Elias Hraoui of the Lebanese Republic and to thank him for opening this debate. In this international forum, I wish once again to reaffirm the full solidarity of the Government and people of Qatar with the position clearly set out by the President of the Lebanese Republic at yesterday's meeting.

I also wish to express my delegation's support for and solidarity with the statements of the heads of delegations of the Arab Group and representatives of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Non-Aligned Movement. Like us, they commend the patience of the Lebanese people in the face of the horrors of the unjustified aggression, oppression, displacement, siege and homelessness to which they have been subjected.

I wish wholeheartedly to thank you, Sir, for your positive response to the request of the Non-Aligned Movement that the General Assembly consider the question of the Israeli aggression against Lebanon, which has continued unabated for some time now. We have seen the escalation and complication of the situation under the ongoing Israeli attacks on Lebanese territory by land, sea and air, in which ever more people are being killed, wounded or made refugees, and Lebanon's basic infrastructure is being destroyed.

The General Assembly's consideration of this aggression is very important, based as it is on the vital need to address this matter in order to counter the obvious weakness — and even impotence — of the Security Council. The Council did not react until events turned truly tragic and everything had gone up in flames; even then, it was unable to restore justice by adopting a resolution that was positive, efficient and fair. The

Council was clearly reluctant to meet, but most of those who eventually participated in its deliberations were able to condemn the aggression, calling for an end to the fighting and the killing. They urged the provision of assistance to the helpless Lebanese people and relief to all those affected. Voices were heard in the Security Council Chamber calling for justice, security and peace.

But the Security Council achieved nothing with the notorious resolution it adopted, which failed to condemn the aggressor and to compel him to halt his aggression. The aggressor was thereby encouraged to pursue his harsh activities. Once again, our sense of the good, our peaceful values and our good intentions were flouted.

We should have liked to see the Security Council adopt the draft resolution submitted by the Arab Group, which was based on the principles of the United Nations Charter, international law and relevant international Conventions, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. Unfortunately, however, the Council adopted a very different resolution that does not embody the principles reflected in the Arab Group draft resolution.

Naturally, this aggravated the situation and fanned the flames of violence and destruction. The situation is deteriorating, claiming more victims every day, and Lebanon is burning on the pyre of a destructive war amid the horrors of the wanton murder of innocent people. Hundreds of thousands of the inhabitants of Lebanon's towns and cities have been made homeless. All the achievements of Lebanon, its symbols of civilization, knowledge, progress and prosperity, are being destroyed. Its basic facilities, its infrastructure and its advances in social and human development are being wiped out.

We all know that the lack of a speedy response to these massive developments in Lebanon on the part of the international community, as represented by the United Nations, is a matter of great concern. It is unjustifiable and unacceptable and runs counter to the culture of a responsible community. It fails to measure up to the requirements and duties of the international community. It is insensitive to the feelings of the vast majority, and leads to a further flouting of the convictions and morals of humanity that are embodied in this Organization.

The Security Council's behaviour has shaken our faith in the values and ideals enshrined in the United Nations Charter. The Council's passivity and its attempts to shirk its obligations, as well as its double standards and the hegemony of some over its decision-making machinery are undermining its credibility, which should be preserved, promoted and strengthened in order to allow the Council truly to assume and discharge its responsibilities.

These double standards of the Security Council in dealing with the explosive situation in Lebanon are very demoralizing and threaten international and regional peace and security. The negative consequences of such a threat could lead to greater destruction of Lebanon's infrastructure and reverse the efforts of its Government and people to rebuild all that was destroyed in the civil war, which was a terrible burden on the Lebanese people, who faced the horrors of destruction throughout an extremely difficult and confused period of Lebanon's modern history.

The Security Council's laxness has also sapped the credibility of its resolutions. Today, the aggressor can pursue its unjust aggressions against the people of Lebanon without any obligation to comply with Security Council resolutions, international law, the traditions of international relations or even the basic principles of the United Nations Charter. The aggressor need not even take into consideration the consequences of its actions on the present and future of the peace process in the Middle East.

Why is all this damage being inflicted on Lebanon? After all it has endured, why must it endure more? Why is it being punished for something with which it has no connection? Lebanon is not responsible and cannot be held responsible for developments in its southern region, because Israel occupies the greater part of that region. Lebanon would be able to discharge its responsibilities if Israel were responsible enough to implement the relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 425 (1978), which calls for its withdrawal from southern Lebanon. The right to resist remains in force until the end of the occupation. The continued arrogant occupation of and aggression against Lebanon, and the targeting of those who are trying to put an end to the occupation, do not help to restore security; rather, they endanger the peace process in the Middle East.

Security cannot be achieved until Lebanon's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity are restored. Security cannot be achieved until Security Council resolution 425 (1978) is implemented. This is the only appropriate response to the violence in the region that will guarantee the continuation of the peace process. Security is the common denominator for all, but it cannot be achieved until all of Lebanon's territory is returned to

the State of Lebanon in accordance with resolution 425 (1978). That is what all parties to the conflict must understand and implement. Any other approach is useless.

It is no longer acceptable for Israel to fall back on the pretext of self-defence. Self-defence cannot justify its behaviour: the air raids and even the shelling of a United Nations post to which helpless civilians had fled the horrors of war, but where they fell martyrs, even in a supposedly safe haven. Self-defence cannot be a pretext for the destruction of the basic infrastructure of a population that is fighting only for survival and seeks only to improve its living conditions and make progress.

The desire for peace and safety is a normal human desire, prevalent throughout the countries of the region. Peace and security are necessary to coexistence, which cannot take root so long as the raids against Lebanon continue. This aggression can only provoke further conflict and violence, even as we all look forward to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region and to the restoration of the rule of law. The only desired competition is that of civilized culture and urbanization.

In order to achieve progress, the State of Qatar has supported the peace process ever since it was begun in Madrid, striving to participate in its activities and to encourage its momentum. We continue to work to achieve the goals of peace in order to fulfil national aspirations with respect to that process and to establish a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the region based on complete Israeli withdrawal from all Palestinian and other occupied Arab territories, including the Golan and southern Lebanon. We look forward to progress on the Lebanese and Syrian tracks in the context of the Madrid formula and Security Council resolutions.

We therefore believe that the continuation of this Israeli aggression will achieve no security objectives. Instead, it will impede the peace process and undermine the confidence sought by all parties in the Middle East in order to achieve that comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region. Given all that, we cannot accept under any pretext Israel's resorting to force and continuing its aggression against Lebanon and its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The Charter of the United Nations clearly prohibits the use of force in international relations. Given our commitment to the letter and spirit of the Charter, and since we are on the side of the sisterly State of Lebanon, the State of Qatar has expressed its firm solidarity with the Lebanese people, who are now the target of Israeli aggression.

This aggression is in violation of Lebanon's sovereignty and in defiance of United Nations resolutions. It is also a threat to peace and security — as well as to national Arab security — and undermines the peace process.

The Council of Ministers of the State of Qatar yesterday expressed its grave concern over the Israeli raids on and aerial bombardments of Lebanon, which it regards as an escalation of tensions and an impediment to the peace process. The Council of Ministers also called for a renunciation of the policy of violence and for the implementation of United Nations resolutions, especially Security Council resolution 242 (1967). That resolution underlines the principles of the Charter and affirms the need for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East through Israel's withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories. The Council of Ministers also urged implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which calls for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from southern Lebanon.

The solidarity of the State of Qatar with the people of Lebanon stems from His Highness the Emir of Qatar, who will lend all assistance to the people of Lebanon in order to alleviate the human suffering at this critical stage in the modern history of Lebanon.

The Security Council has let down the civilian population of Lebanon, which seeks help. The Security Council has shirked its primary responsibility in the area of the maintenance of international peace and security, a responsibility conferred on it by Article 24 of the Charter. Lebanon has therefore sought recourse by coming to the Assembly, supported by the Non-Aligned Movement and the Arab Group.

My delegation therefore appeals to the international community, as represented by the Assembly, to adopt the draft resolution, which condemns the Israeli aggression and calls for an immediate halt to all military operations; Israel's withdrawal from Lebanese territory, in conformity with Security Council resolution 425 (1978); and respect for Lebanon's territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence within its internationally recognized boundaries. The resolution finally adopted is expected to call for the return of all displaced persons and respect for the safety of the civilian population under international law. The draft resolution

underlines the right of Lebanon to appropriate redress for the destruction, and calls upon Member States to offer humanitarian assistance to alleviate the suffering of the population.

The great people of Lebanon have worked hard in order to rebuild their country. They have spared no effort to achieve that goal. The new damage should be addressed by all of us; it is the responsibility of the international community, the United Nations system and international funding institutions and donor partners to work tirelessly to ensure the reconstruction of Lebanon. We hope that this resumed session of the General Assembly will serve as an invitation to the international community to pursue that work and to support the efforts of sisterly Lebanon in the area of reconstruction.

May God the Almighty protect Lebanon; may God the Lord be on the side of Lebanon in this crisis so that those who suffered will find solace from His support. We hope that the tears shed by the innocent victims will lead to an alleviation of their suffering. We pray to the Lord that Lebanon will find solace and support.

May all of Lebanon live in peace and harmony; may its mountains remain a symbol of persistence and perseverance; may God the Lord protect Lebanon so that its existence may be assured and so that it may continue to be a haven for the persecuted; may it remain the land of literature and wisdom; may it continue to say "Give us a chance".

These are the fruits of Lebanon: goodness and love, not grapes of wrath, not fire. Lebanon inspires human civilization. May God protect the patient Lebanon and preserve it as a land of glory, beauty, eternal charity and a beacon of great values, so that it may continue to inspire our existence. May God allow the beauty of Lebanon to become clearer and more beautiful. May God the Lord preserve Lebanon and keep it as a land of peace held dear by Arabs.

Mr. Zarif (Islamic Republic of Iran): For the past 14 days, the world has been watching with much horror and indignation, but regrettably with little action, the latest episode of Zionist lawlessness, aggression, and terrorism against the innocent men, women and children of Lebanon. The President of Lebanon, in his moving statement yesterday, described the massive dimensions of Israeli crimes against the Lebanese people, crimes that have surpassed even the brutal record of the Israeli military in the past several years and are reminiscent of its aggression against Lebanon in 1982.

A significant element of the recent Israeli operation, as illustrated even by its name, was the public pronouncement of its objective to instil fear and terror into the Lebanese population, thereby compelling the people and Government of Lebanon to submit to Israeli occupation of their territory and to take the line of action desired by Israel. That is why the targets of these waves of Israeli raids from air, land and sea have been the civilian population and the economic infrastructure. Thus, ambulances, United Nations peace-keeping facilities, turned into temporary refugee shelters, and power plants have been deliberately targeted by the aggressor. The naval blockade has caused serious shortages, and the road linking Beirut to southern Lebanon has been shelled continuously in another effort to strangulate the south. These, in addition to a daily average of 2,000 air raids and more than 15,000 shells, are all geared to show that the ruthless army of occupation does not know any bounds in pursuing its terrorist objectives.

The illegality and indeed criminality of Israeli occupation of, and operations against, Lebanon cannot be questioned. The occupation of southern Lebanon for the past two decades is a clear case of aggression and a violation of the territorial integrity of Lebanon, as well as blatant disregard for the repeated demands of the international community, including the demands made in Security Council resolution 425 (1978). Moreover, Israel's recent attacks against Lebanon constitute not only further aggression and disregard for Lebanese territorial integrity and sovereignty, but also a textbook case of State terrorism and a clear case of crime against humanity, deliberately and indiscriminately targeting civilians, doing so with terrorist and criminal intent.

The disguises and scapegoats concocted by Israel and its arrogant supporters cannot even come close to justifying the brutality of Israeli forces in Lebanon. Nor are their attempts to rewrite history and re-interpret Security Council resolution 425 (1978) tenable. The unquestionable fact is that Israeli occupation of Lebanon is the root cause of the current wave of violence and bloodshed there. It is also self-evident that the occupation occurred in 1978, well be ore the scapegoat blamed by Israel even existed, and continued for years before it even came to being; so did Israel's non-compliance with Security Council resolution 425 (1978). Furthermore, the fictitious allegations by Israel against others are but a

campaign of deceptive propaganda and disinformation to divert attention from their crimes.

The simple fact is that, in spite of the deceptive facade, terrorism, occupation and aggression have been a constant feature and indeed a natural component of the Zionist agenda in our region. That, coupled with the non-realization of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, are the main reasons for the Middle East crisis. Unless the root causes of this crisis are properly addressed, achievement of a just and durable peace and stability in the Middle East will be far from reality.

Those who initially encouraged and openly supported Israeli aggression, crimes and intransigence inside and outside the Security Council, even at the expense of undermining Security Council resolutions, and who initially presented completely one-sided proposals to protect the aggressor, are obviously and admittedly not impartial. Their monopolistic approach and the self-serving endorsement of their role by Israel only exacerbate the issue of credibility.

At the same time, it is imperative for the international community as a whole and those with influence to take every step to bring Israeli atrocities against Lebanon and Lebanese civilians to an end. In this context, the Islamic Republic of Iran, in addition to providing humanitarian assistance, has been in close contact with Syria and Lebanon, as well as with Italy, as President of the European Union, France and Russia.

The July 1993 understanding, which came about following intense joint efforts by Iran and Syria, can provide the basis for these efforts. However, it should be borne in mind that the 1993 understanding was violated 231 times by Israel before its most recent aggression, and therefore credible guarantees are necessary to ensure that similar violations, which each time lead to further misery and the displacement of thousands of innocent Lebanese civilians, are not repeated.

The consideration by the General Assembly of the Israeli atrocities against the Lebanese people is totally appropriate and timely. This is particularly so because of the absence of a serious and effective response by the Security Council, which indeed amounts to the Council's tragic failure to discharge its primary responsibility: to maintain international peace and security.

For nearly two decades, Security Council resolution 425 (1978) demanding withdrawal of Israeli forces from southern Lebanon has been totally disregarded by Israel with impunity. The Council has been prevented in the past 18 years from taking any step to put an end to such blatant non-compliance. Furthermore, the Council has been paralysed from effectively addressing the recent aggression by Israel against Lebanon, which has not only had immeasurable humanitarian consequences, but constitutes the most serious threat to regional and international peace and security.

Worse yet, attempts have been made by Israel and its benefactor inside the Council to reinterpret Security Council resolution 425 (1978) and make its unconditional demands for withdrawal contingent upon extraneous elements. Their argument is simply wrong and illogical, as it makes implementation of a Security Council resolution conditional upon circumstances which did not even exist at the time of its adoption, and also justifies aggression, continued occupation of territory by force and persistent non-compliance with Security Council resolutions.

It is astonishing to note that the Government and people of Lebanon, who are fighting to liberate their territory from prolonged foreign occupation — an inherent and inalienable right recognized by international law and enshrined in the United Nations Charter — are called upon to give up their right to self-defence and hence submit to aggression, occupation, and non-compliance with Security Council resolution 425 (1978).

The Council, which acts on behalf of the entire membership and must constitutionally and logically be accountable before the membership, embodied in the General Assembly, should be asked to explain such duplicity and to desist from undermining its own resolutions and damaging in the process the credibility of the Organization as a whole.

The General Assembly, for its part, as elaborated by the President of Lebanon yesterday, must reflect the views of international public opinion by condemning in the strongest terms Israeli atrocities in Lebanon, demanding their immediate cessation and holding Israel accountable for its crimes against humanity and the damage and losses inflicted upon Lebanon and its population. The Assembly must also call for the unconditional implementation by Israel of Security Council resolution 425 (1978).

As we have seen time and again, appeasing aggressors and war criminals always leads to further

misery and disaster. The General Assembly, which took the lead in rejecting the Security Council's appeasement policy in the Bosnian case, must once again take the lead in this case, thereby contributing to an immediate, realistic and durable end to the wave of violence and bloodshed.

Mr. Snoussi (Morocco) (*interpretation from French*): Allow me first, Sir, to take this opportunity to express my delegation's pleasure at seeing you preside so wisely and ably over the work of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly.

My delegation would also like to take this occasion to warmly welcome His Excellency Mr. Elias Hraoui, President of the Lebanese Republic. His presence in our city and among us illustrates the importance that his country attaches to the role of the United Nations in finding a settlement to the Lebanese crisis, and emphasizes in the most serious way the tragedy undergone by his country.

Since the adoption by the Security Council on 18 April 1996 of resolution 1052 (1996) the deplorable situation in Lebanon has continued to deteriorate, and the areas affected by the violence have grown. The toll in human lives and the destruction worsen every day. The dreadful pictures of the victims of the shelling of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) compound horrified us all.

We feel deep sadness and concern at seeing dozens of innocent civilians perish in a shelter where they were supposed to be protected by the United Nations. My delegation would like to reiterate its fraternal sympathy and condolences to the Government and people of Lebanon. The tragedy of Lebanon is a challenge to the international community. We feel its suffering and must do our utmost to bring it to a halt — and quickly.

The territorial integrity of Lebanon, its sovereignty, its political independence and its international frontiers have once again been ignored and violated, contrary to the provisions of the United Nations Charter and the most fundamental rules and principles of international law.

In humanitarian terms, no distinction has been made between civilian and military targets, and displaced persons have precipitously fled their homes and continue to flee in a ceaseless stream. They are frustrated and desperate and, what is more serious, have perhaps lost for ever that glimmer of confidence that the region had entered a new era, which Lebanon had the right to aspire to after having lived through so many dark years.

We must also deplore the fact that the infrastructure of Lebanon has been so seriously damaged, thus dealing a cruel blow to the country's reconstruction and development efforts, which had been undertaken so courageously since the return of peace. Furthermore, the military attacks by land, sea and air have paralysed the life of the civilian population and even destroyed internationally protected monuments.

This situation is extremely alarming. It calls for emergency humanitarian assistance, which the international community — the United Nations system in particular — must deliver promptly to the Government and people of Lebanon. We sincerely hope that the delivery of that assistance to the needy, the needs being so great, will not itself be delayed. We must also underline the need to guarantee the protection and security of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon and respect for its freedom of movement.

The unfortunate developments in the situation in Lebanon gravely threaten the advent of a comprehensive peace in the Middle East. The escalation, due in particular to the disproportionate use of force, calls into question and jeopardizes the will so often expressed to bring the peace process to a successful conclusion.

Morocco cannot remain passive in the face of these alarming developments. That is why it did not hesitate to contribute to the international efforts to bring the hostilities in Lebanon to an immediate halt, efforts which should be welcomed in a constructive spirit and should be emulated by those involved.

My country hopes that the intensification of these efforts, which have gone on tirelessly for several days, will lead to an arrangement with a just, firm and lasting basis, to make it possible at long last to protect Lebanon from the threats to everything achieved so far, and to extinguish that hotbed of tension once and for all. Such an arrangement should be able to relaunch the peace process, which we unreservedly support, and which must lead to the implementation of resolution 425 (1978), with the return of the Golan Heights to Syria, in the context of respect for international law and the legitimate interests of all the parties.

The entire international community agrees that those are the foundations for a just, lasting and comprehensive peace that will lead the Middle East towards stability, security, and peaceful coexistence, with mutual respect and cooperation.

Many challenges await us and will continue even when comprehensive peace has become a reality. Let us not bear the responsibility for delaying the peace process unduly, and let us not give its enemies weapons to fight it. Let us put this tragedy behind quickly and get down to settling the outstanding issues in a spirit of goodwill, to make peace irreversible. Let us not forget that recent events, with all the hardships involved, are part of the threats to the precarious peace, a peace so far only partially established. Let us ensure that we do nothing to postpone this long-awaited peace even further or to jeopardize this historic, patient endeavour, in which all the peoples of the region, despite everything that has happened, continue to place great hopes.

Mr. Dejammet (France) (*interpretation from French*): France is seriously concerned over the present situation in Lebanon. The spiral of violence, the increasing number of victims, mostly civilians, the serious risks to the continuation of the peace process, the violations of territorial integrity and the harm done to Lebanon's reconstruction efforts all explain the concern of the international community. They also justify the diplomatic action under way, the adoption of resolution 1052 (1996) by the Security Council and the present convening of the General Assembly.

I would like first to say how deeply moved France is by the humanitarian tragedy which Lebanon is undergoing. Several hundred thousand citizens have had to flee their homes; almost 150 Lebanese civilians are dead, a hundred of them in the Qana massacre; hundreds of civilians have been wounded; various civilian targets have been hit. Aid from the international community must be sent immediately. The civilian population and civilian installations must no longer be targeted. The security and freedom of movement of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) must be fully respected as well, particularly in the present situation, so that the UNIFIL peace force can carry out its humanitarian job effectively. Freedom of movement must immediately be guaranteed on the coast road to allow humanitarian convoys access to the southern part of the country.

France also hopes that Lebanon, after 17 years of confrontation and tribulation, and after four years of reconstruction and rehabilitation involving a number of hardships for its population, will not have to bear the cost of the destruction resulting from the events of the last 12 days. That is why we appeal for international solidarity so that everyone — and primarily the international financial institutions — may help in the effort to repair as quickly as possible the damage to the country's infrastructure, particularly in the energy field, and civilian housing. The 200,000 people who had to flee southern Lebanon must be able to return to their homes as soon as possible. France has begun to repair the power plants which were destroyed, so that the power supply to the inhabitants of Beirut can be restored in the shortest possible time. Furthermore, we have sent emergency assistance which will soon amount to f3 million.

But humanitarian action and reconstruction are not enough. France hopes that diplomatic efforts, its own as well as those of the United States, the European Union and Russia, will succeed quickly. It calls for an immediate cease-fire and the conclusion of a lasting accord. It also calls for respect for the major principles defined by the international community: the implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which calls for strict respect for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognized boundaries; and the right of all States in the region, notably Lebanon and Israel, to live in peace and security, which in particular means that the civilian populations on both sides of the border have the right to live free of the fear of becoming victims of fighting and acts of violence.

France emphasizes the importance of a rapid resumption of peace negotiations between Israel and Syria and between Israel and Lebanon, and in that respect we remind the Assembly of our willingness to contribute to defining and implementing security guarantees which might prove necessary.

Finally, we would like to express our hope that the solution to the present crisis will be a step towards the long-awaited establishment of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

Mr. Cárdenas (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Since 1993 we have been following with real hope the great progress in the Middle East peace process. For example, a few months ago the elections in the West Bank and Gaza Strip seemed to be a good omen for peace in the region. This progress raised the hopes of the international community that there might be a settlement of the many complex conflicts in the Middle East.

The very difficult situation in Lebanon today seems particularly serious in the light of those hopes. The chain reaction produced by significant terrorist attacks on Israel

followed by recent counter-measures, which even involved disregard of the status of our Organization's forces, is a grave threat to the continuation of the peace process.

We think that all United Nations bodies with responsibility for international peace and security should take a stand on the subject before us; the gravity of the situation requires that.

On 18 April 1996 the Security Council adopted resolution 1052 (1996), which we believe contains the essential elements for restoring conditions in which the continuity of the peace process will be a reality — namely, an immediate cessation of hostilities and immediate and unrestricted respect by all for the security of the civilian population and the security and freedom of movement of United Nations personnel assigned to Lebanon.

That resolution, like all other resolutions of the Security Council relating to the situation in Lebanon, must be respected. We fully support the provisions of resolution 1052 (1996) regarding the need to mobilize the international community in order urgently to mitigate the suffering of the abused civilian population of Lebanon and to assist the Government in rebuilding the country, which has once again been levelled just as the damage caused by more than 15 sad years of violence was beginning to be overcome.

Accordingly, we would like to announce the decision of the Government of the Republic of Argentina to send immediately medicine, food and other supplies to the people of Lebanon in two Argentine air force planes specifically designated to carry out humanitarian tasks. This shipment will be made with the cooperation of the United Nations Volunteers in the context of the "White Helmets" initiative and of General Assembly resolution 50/19.

The Republic of Argentina deeply and frankly deplores the loss of civilian life, the immense human sacrifice and the enormous material damage caused by recent events in Lebanon. It is particularly painful to see a people that has been almost exhausted by one of the longest and cruellest civil wars in history still having to suffer violence, as if for that people peace were but an impossible dream. But we also regret the loss of life among the Israelis, caused by terrorism or by the use of missiles.

My Government also extends its sincerest sympathy to the Government of Fiji for the attack on its military personnel in the service of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), as they were trying, with the characteristic nobility of the Blue Helmets, to alleviate human suffering in the field. We believe that respect for, and the security of, United Nations personnel is essential if UNIFIL is to be able to carry out its mandate. We welcome the great clarity in the text of resolution 1052 (1996) on the subject, with which we fully agree.

We also hope that all the recent diplomatic initiatives to achieve the speedy restoration of peace in the Middle East will be successfully concluded and carried out in a joint and coordinated manner. At the same time, we wish to express our full support for these initiatives and our appreciation to all the Governments that are so diligently and directly involved in them.

Allow me once again to assert the right of all the States of the region — and of their peoples, with which we are bound by very special ties — to live in conditions of security and in peace. Force, whether exercised by terrorists or by regular armies, must not be allowed to prevail. Reason and peaceful negotiations, no matter how long and complex, are the only way. Peace imposed by gunfire is only a truce, and at times it may not even be that.

Thus, we urge all the actors without exception to cease their armed, violent actions and to continue steadfastly along the path of the peace process, to advance on the negotiating tracks, which will ensure lasting success. Peace cannot be born of terror. Hope will not grow out of violence. Only genuine respect and tolerance for diversity make it possible to imagine a common road where a life in peace is everyone's objective. We pledge ourselves to helping everyone travel that road. Let us hope that this will come to pass.

Mr. Park (Republic of Korea): Five months ago, during the initial discussion of the agenda item at hand, this Hall reverberated with strong voices of support and encouragement for the Middle East peace process. Although the loss of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin dealt a tragic blow to the peace process, it was consistently stressed that even the most complex and seemingly intractable conflicts could be surmounted through candid and open-minded dialogue.

Regrettably, the situation in Lebanon and along the Israel-Lebanon border over the past two weeks has pulled the peace process in a tenuous direction. Despite the call for an immediate cessation of hostilities, particularly

through Security Council resolution 1052 (1996), the situation in the area has been deteriorating by the day and eroding the overall peace process in the Middle East. It has been dismaying to witness the bridges of mutual trust and understanding, which were so arduously and delicately constructed, being replaced with mistrust and violence.

As my delegation has emphasized on several occasions, peace in the Middle East cannot be whole without reconciliation between Israel and Lebanon, Israel and Syria and Israel and Palestine, as envisaged by the Madrid Peace Conference in 1991. The three tracks are all closely intertwined, exerting mutual and immediate influence upon each other. The international community acknowledged the vital importance of this interrelationship by unanimously applauding the Palestinian election in January, while concurrently denouncing the recent terrorist attacks in Israel and deploring the hardships of the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza.

The ongoing hostilities in and around Lebanon are also a matter of grave concern from the perspective of regional peace and security. We note with great dismay that the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Lebanon have been infringed upon, in violation of the United Nations Charter.

Just as Israel has the right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries and free from threats or acts of force, as affirmed by Security Council resolution 242 (1967), the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognized boundaries should also be strictly respected, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 425 (1978). In our view, it is primarily in this context that the Security Council discussed the issue and adopted resolution 1052 (1996) last week by a unanimous vote.

Despite this resolution and the urging of the international community, the hostilities have continued unabated, and the situation remains grim. Sadly, this violence has taken its most brutal toll upon innocent and defenceless civilians, with the number of refugees reaching a staggering half a million, resulting in further aggravation of the humanitarian situation in the area of conflict.

We remain disturbed by the ever increasing number of civilian casualties which have resulted from the continued targeting of cities and villages by the parties concerned. Such military action against the civilian population constitutes a grave violation of international humanitarian law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, to which both Lebanon and Israel are parties.

Last Thursday the international community was shocked by the shelling of a United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) site by the Israeli Defence Force, in which over 100 civilians were killed and many more, including three Fijian peace-keepers, were wounded. We would like to extend our sincere condolences to the Governments of Fiji and Lebanon, as well as to the bereaved families of the victims.

We strongly believe that any self-defence measures should be circumscribed by the principle of proportionality firmly established in international law. For this reason, there can be no justification for such an attack on a position of United Nations peace-keepers or for the large-scale military action by the Israeli Defence Force against Lebanon.

The current situation serves as a sobering reminder of the significant obstacles which exist in overcoming the deep-rooted suspicions and hatred among the parties in the region. Accordingly, Korea reiterates its firm view that only through open-minded and serious dialogue can the parties concerned overcome these formidable impediments to peace and security in the Middle East.

The Republic of Korea is absolutely convinced that military means will not provide the solution in order to achieve peace and security in the Middle East. The continuation of hostilities and the destruction of human lives and property will merely provide the extremists with further pretexts to hamper the peace process and will dim the prospects for achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the region.

Needless to say, what is most urgently needed at this critical juncture is to put an end to the senseless killing of innocent people and the destruction of civilian properties through an immediate cessation of hostilities and, thereby, to prevent the Middle East peace process from spiralling downward.

My delegation therefore joins the appeals of the international community to the parties to cease the hostilities immediately and to resume negotiations for a peaceful settlement on the basis of the relevant Security Council resolutions so that peace in the region may have a chance to be secured.

In this connection, we welcome the intensive diplomatic efforts now being made by the international community to restore peace and stability to the region. It is our sincere hope that these concerted efforts will produce positive results as soon as possible.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to express its strong hope that this resumed session of the General Assembly will sound an unmistakable call by the international community for the immediate cessation of hostilities.

Mr. Bergh (South Africa): The peace process in the Middle East is under siege once again, with the deterioration of the situation inflicting further damage to an already fragile process.

We in South Africa, who know the pain and suffering caused by violent confrontation, consider it our moral obligation to raise our voices in a clarion call for the political and peaceful resolution of all confrontations. That is why my Government has in the last few days expressed its condemnation of the current escalation of the conflict.

We have made clear our firm belief that intensification of the current conflict only serves the agenda of those forces which seek to disrupt the Middle East peace process, a process to which South Africa is firmly committed.

My delegation is particularly dismayed by the total disregard of international agreements governing the protection of civilians during armed conflicts. In this regard, the attack by Israeli forces on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) refugee compound in Lebanon, which took a heavy toll of lives of innocent civilians, deserves strong condemnation.

Israel must be prevailed upon to desist from its attacks which seem to constitute a policy of collective responsibility and punishment. Such indiscriminate killing and maiming of defenceless people is bound to harden attitudes and lead to the erosion of the will to resolve the conflict peacefully.

My delegation believes that whatever the problems that sparked this crisis, the way forward to a comprehensive, just and durable peace cannot be based on force and violence. South Africa accordingly urges restraint by Israel and appeals to all the parties involved in the current conflict to respond positively to efforts aimed at ending hostilities through mediation and to put the peace process back on track.

Furthermore, my delegation believes that a lasting solution to the crisis in the Middle East lies in the adherence by the parties concerned to the terms of Security Council resolution 425 (1978).

This body should act now to facilitate more decisive action for the attainment of peace in that region.

Mr. Agathocleous (Cyprus): Cyprus, linked with neighbourly Lebanon by traditional ties of close friendship, cannot but voice its grave concern over the crisis and tragic events in the area.

These events not only cause human misery and destruction, but also pose a serious threat to the peace process and stability in our fragile region. We are following with great anxiety the latest aggravation of the situation in Lebanon, and we are deeply concerned by the escalating hostilities and acts of violence causing so much suffering and hardship in the area.

The Government and the people of Cyprus deeply regret the loss of life and suffering inflicted on the innocent civilian population in the area, including in particular the tragedy at Qana, and we express our sympathy to the families of the victims. Our sympathy goes also to the injured United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) personnel. In response to the United Nations appeal for assistance, as a result of the emergency in Lebanon, which resulted in the displacement of more than 400,000 people, my Government will take immediate steps to provide humanitarian assistance for the alleviation of immediate needs.

Cyprus has excellent relations with all States in the region and endeavours to play a constructive role in fostering regional stability and cooperation. Lebanon is an important country in the area, and we have no doubt that it can play a decisive role in the emerging Middle East.

We have followed with admiration the pace of economic reconstruction and development under way in the country, reflecting the resiliency and hard work of its talented people. Regrettably, however, all this is being put into jeopardy once again.

Recent events have shown the precarious nature of the peace process in the Middle East and highlighted the imperative need to redouble the efforts for its survival and ultimately successful outcome, on which millions of

people, both in the region and internationally, have pinned great hopes.

My Government supports all the initiatives and efforts aimed at finding a solution to the present crisis. We join the international community in calling for an immediate cease-fire. We reaffirm our support for the implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978). At the same time, we recognize the right of all States in the region to exist, in peace with their neighbours, within safe and internationally recognized borders. We denounce in the strongest terms terrorism and acts of violence against innocent civilians.

The prospect of a peaceful and a prosperous Middle East is a dream cherished by all. However, it cannot be secured by violence or military build-up but, rather, only by a common vision for a better future through stability, economic progress, and social justice. It is the hope of my country and my Government that this dream will not be lost.

Mr. Jeludin (Brunei Darussalam): Over the past few years the world has been led to believe that peace has finally been achieved in the Middle East. Unfortunately, the ongoing bombardment of Lebanon is endangering the current peace process. The attack on the civilian population in southern Lebanon has resulted in injuries and deaths among innocent people, including women and children, as well as the displacement of hundreds of thousands of refugees. The military action has also seriously threatened the safety and lives of United Nations peace-keepers and impeded the fulfilment of their duties.

Brunei Darussalam is deeply concerned about this military action, which clearly violates the United Nations principles of respect for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of a Member country of this Organization. The attack has threatened the peace and security of the Middle East and could jeopardize the current peace process aimed at finding a comprehensive peace settlement in the region. Brunei Darussalam therefore condemns this attack.

Brunei Darussalam calls for an immediate cessation of hostilities between the parties concerned and calls upon the United Nations to implement Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which calls for the immediate withdrawal of the Israelis from the buffer zone in southern Lebanon and the Bekaa valley.

Brunei Darussalam further welcomes the ongoing diplomatic efforts taken by the United States and European allies and hopes that an immediate cease-fire can be achieved by all parties concerned. As a small nation, we reaffirm our commitment to the attainment of lasting peace and security in that region. It is the task of every Member State of the United Nations to fully respect the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of other countries, and Israel is no exception.

Mr. Illueca (Panama) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The unfortunate events and suffering inflicted upon Lebanon in recent days prompt us to turn to the victims and their bereaved with expressions of deep solidarity and sorrow. We transmit those feelings to the people and the Government of Lebanon through His Excellency the President of the Lebanese Republic, Mr. Elias Hraoui, whose presence in this Assembly yesterday highlighted the serious dimensions of the grave crisis in his country.

Mr. Abibi (Congo), Vice-President, took the Chair.

My delegation deplores the deaths and injuries, and we are alarmed by the exodus of people caused by the bombing. This we say with the same sincerity with which we expressed our condolences for the victims of the terrorist attacks that plunged Israel into mourning a few weeks ago and, months earlier, for the assassination of the Prime Minister of Israel, Yitzhak Rabin, whose exhortation of peace should serve as an inspiration and an example.

The General Assembly, having been convened to deal with the Israeli bombing of Lebanon, is addressing one of the evils constantly threatening the spiritual and intellectual substance of societies and of the international community as a whole. To name the evil is the first way to combat it. The offensive actions of Hezbollah must cease, as must those of the Israeli forces. The justification of violence as a means of suppressing other forms of violence leads to a blind evil that can only arouse the concern and perturbation of the international community, which came together in an effort to preserve peace and security. The Israeli bombings in Lebanon are explained as punitive action. As we have seen, it is punitive action that has taken innocent lives.

It is intrinsically impossible for violence to spawn agreement and peace. For this elementary reason, the United Nations cannot agree with any ethic of punishment that serves to feed hatred, radicalizing and poisoning causes and allying them with crime, terrorism and

brutality. Israel's intentions are blurred by the innocent victims of the bombing in Lebanon. Those innocent victims gave the bombings the dimensions of events that have deeply wounded the conscience of mankind, and they have led the international community to go beyond rhetoric and to commit itself to measures to prevent a repetition of such events, to ensure respect for the Geneva Conventions and to safeguard the civilian population from the cruelty and barbarity of a pitiless armed struggle.

Those innocent victims include members of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). The bombing of the headquarters of the Fiji battalion in Qana with sophisticated, mathematically precise weapons, killed more than 100 Lebanese refugees — men, women and children — and wounded many others, including three soldiers in the Fiji contingent, whose efforts to bring about peace deserve the gratitude of the Member States of our Organization. My delegation supports the statement made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations when he became aware of this information. As a result of all these events, especially those which took place on 18 April, and following the adoption of Security Council resolution 1052 (1996), the Government of Panama highlighted the need to confront the problems with caution and sanity so as to spare nations further pain and grief.

My delegation would like to say once again, before the General Assembly, that the principles of international law must be respected with regard to friendship and cooperation between nations, in keeping with the United Nations Charter. The path to peace requires early compliance with Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which focuses on full respect for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon.

All of us who have, here at the United Nations, professed devotion to and faith in the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East know that nowhere in the world does peace depend solely on the elimination of political disagreements. We know that peace is also a matter of justice, tolerance and the abolition of all causes of conflicts, including those that contribute to underdevelopment and poverty. We also know that peace and security — goals enshrined in the United Nations Charter — which are better than war or anarchy, are also much more difficult to attain.

We do not believe that a simplistic vision of the elements making up the situation in the Middle East is useful in proposing solutions. At the same time, we believe that violence and terrorism only serve to impede the desired settlements and solutions and the progress in the peace process. My delegation stands behind any action intended to bring relief to the civilian population of Lebanon, which is so sorely in need of international assistance. My delegation will also support any actions undertaken to repair the tremendous damage caused in Lebanese territory and the destruction in the city of Tyre, where the worth of every stone has survived the accidents of geography and history.

In this General Assembly as has happened many times in the past 50 years, reality puts us face to face with the urgent need of seeking peace and of strengthening, without destroying anything or anyone, unity in human conduct, which is a primary function of States and statesmen, and which stands in opposition to fear, threats, violence, political and State terrorism, cruelty, injustice and any action incompatible with the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Mr. Giacomini (San Marino): The delegation of the Republic of San Marino, speaking at the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, which has been resumed to examine the situation in the Middle East, expresses its Government's astonishment and dismay at the new spiral of violence in that afflicted region.

Once more, violence seems to prevail over diplomacy, dialogue and the exchange of ideas. The situation in this region, which is of vital importance for the complex balance of peace both geographically and politically, is capable of compromising the development of a dialogue between Western and Eastern countries and between North and South, and it arouses great concern in all of us.

The peace process, which was already difficult to promote, now seems to be in danger. Paradoxically, it has already cost many human lives. Let us not forget that it was built through the engagement of those who, operating at the highest levels, including representatives of parties not directly involved, believed in it and worked tirelessly for it, in some cases sacrificing their own lives.

The Republic of San Marino has always been in favour of pursuing peace and dialogue; it is firmly against the use of force as a means to resolve disputes. Today, we intend to appeal to all parties directly involved in the conflict to stop the fighting and violence and find the strength — the real strength — to resume dialogue. Indeed, that is the only way to attain a fair and long-lasting peace. Real strength is necessary, because

sometimes it is easier to take up arms than to shake your neighbour's hand.

The Republic of San Marino calls for the full implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which was endorsed by all the members of the Security Council on 18 April 1996, and it sincerely hopes that this longed-for peace will finally be achieved.

Mr. Kamal (Pakistan): Yesterday, the President of the Republic of Lebanon, His Excellency Mr. Elias Hraoui, gave us a moving account of the ongoing brutal and naked aggression by Israeli forces against Lebanon. This premeditated Israeli aggression has already resulted in the deaths of more than 175 innocent civilians and injuries to more than double that figure. Nearly half a million people have been made homeless. These inhumane attacks have crippled the economy of Lebanon.

In a further arrogant aggravation of this aggression, Israel deliberately shelled a United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) post where hundreds of Lebanese refugees had taken shelter, resulting in the massacre of innocent civilians and United Nations peace-keepers.

The Government and people of Pakistan are shocked by these barbaric acts, and express their full solidarity with the people and Government of Lebanon in their hour of trial. The Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, has condemned this Israeli aggression in the strongest possible terms. To alleviate the sufferings of the Lebanese people, Pakistan has decided to urgently send emergency relief assistance, including medicines, foodstuffs and blankets, to Lebanon.

While the Israeli aggression is yet another blatant violation of international norms, and has dealt a serious blow to the efforts for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, we must also note that this is not the first time that Israeli forces have resorted to this kind of brutality against the people of Lebanon. This is part of a pattern of aggressive arrogance that has been witnessed over several decades now. Confronted with popular resistance in its occupied territories, Israel has repeatedly unleashed its military machine on unarmed civilians. Israeli forces have been used in a brutal and indiscriminate manner in a vain effort to terrorize the people in the occupied territories into submission. The scale of killings and human misery that has resulted amply proves that State terrorism is the worst form of terrorism. I should like to recall that the Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned countries, meeting at their Tenth Summit Conference in Jakarta in 1992,

> "denounced the brutalization of peoples kept under foreign occupation as the gravest form of terrorism." *(A/47/675, annex, p. 77)*

The world has taken note of the aggressive pattern of Israeli behaviour, and of its grave consequences for Lebanon. Twenty years ago the Security Council passed resolution 425 (1978), which called, in particular, for strict respect for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognized boundaries. This resolution also explicitly called upon Israel to immediately cease its military actions against Lebanon, and to withdraw its forces forthwith from the territory of Lebanon. Twenty years down the line, this resolution remains unimplemented, in sharp contrast to other Security Council resolutions whose implementation has been followed up with such assiduity. The selective implementation of Security Council resolutions has not helped the credibility of either the Security Council or the United Nations.

Just last week the situation in Lebanon was again the subject of two debates in the Security Council. Even as that debate was going on, Israel's unabated aggression against Lebanon continued, as it is continuing today. Not only have the Israeli authorities flagrantly violated the provisions of resolution 425 (1978), but appeals by the Security Council, by regional and international organizations and by the international community, all continue to fall on deaf ears.

Paradoxically, at the same time, Israel talks of seeking peace with its neighbours. A peace package that does not respect the sovereignty of other countries, or is accompanied by such outrageously aggressive behaviour, contains the seeds of self-destruction. To achieve a durable and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, progress must also be made in resolving the Israeli-Syrian and Israeli-Lebanese disputes. Unless these fundamental issues are adequately addressed, peace will continue to elude the region. That is why Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978) continue to provide a viable and just framework for the resolution of the Middle East and Palestinian problems. The endangered peace process can only be saved by immediate and unconditional Israeli withdrawal from all occupied territories. Unless and until the international community prevails upon Israel to withdraw from all

these occupied territories, peace in the Middle East cannot be achieved.

Pakistan appeals to the co-sponsors of the Middle East peace process to influence Israel to fully implement the relevant Security Council resolutions, particularly resolution 425 (1978). In addition, Lebanon should be fully compensated by Israel for the widespread destruction it has caused.

The international community must take a clear position against this outrageous manifestation of State terrorism. If we fail to do so, we will have failed to fulfil our basic obligations towards a Member State of the United Nations and a people whose rights have been so brutally transgressed, as well as towards the whole multilateral system concretized in the United Nations Charter. History will not forgive us if we do not act decisively now.

Mr. Mabilangan (Philippines): On behalf of the Filipino people and Government, the Philippine delegation wishes to express its most profound regret at the senseless loss of life, especially of innocent civilians and non-combatants, among the people of Lebanon, as a result of bombardments in the south of Lebanon and the exchange of fire between guerrillas and the Israeli military. Philippine President Fidel V. Ramos has expressed condolences to the Government and people of Lebanon on the tragic and unfortunate loss of lives.

We join the world community in calling for the cessation of hostilities. We also associate ourselves with the statement of the Non-Aligned Movement of 22 April 1996, and support the Security Council resolution of 18 April 1996, adopted in response to the current crisis in Lebanon, and its call for a comprehensive settlement of the Lebanese question.

The Philippine delegation realizes that the situation is multifaceted. However, we deeply deplore the fact that the brunt of the attacks have been borne by civilians. The senseless carnage must come to an end. The Philippine delegation expresses its support for all efforts made to realize peace in the troubled region. We urge all parties not to squander the precious gains made thus far in the Middle East peace process.

We hope that the spirit of reconciliation will be rekindled between the Lebanese and Israeli nations so that lasting peace in the region can be realized.

Mr. Kouliev (Azerbaijan) (*interpretation from Russian*): The resumption by the General Assembly of its consideration of the agenda item entitled "The situation in the Middle East" testifies to the extreme nature of the situation which has emerged in this region, requiring an immediate reaction by the world community. The delegation of Azerbaijan would like to express its deep concern at the escalation of tension, including recourse to arms, in southern Lebanon.

Today Lebanon is undergoing another tragedy. The shelling of Lebanese territory — villages and cities, including some parts of Beirut — and other fighting have resulted in many casualties among the civilian population and much destruction. Hundreds of thousands of people have become refugees in their own land. This returns us all to times we thought were over. This tragedy is taking place at a time when Lebanon had begun to heal its wounds, when it was regaining its strength and repairing what had been destroyed by war. Once again there is a military crisis, with serious losses and casualties. We believe that it is essential to emphasize the inadmissibility of any infringement of Lebanon's territorial integrity or any violation of its sovereignty, which constitute direct threats to its statehood. Azerbaijan declares its firm support for the Government and people of Lebanon, fighting for the unity and integrity of their country.

The critical situation which has arisen requires urgent and effective steps. First and foremost, there must be an immediate cessation of all fighting. All the parties to the conflict must demonstrate restraint and avoid any further escalation of hostility and violence. We are growing more concerned at the humanitarian consequences of the present escalation of violence in Lebanon. There continue to be alarming reports in the media that the number of casualties among the peaceful population is growing, and that elderly people, women and children are dying. A new wave of migration may lead to another humanitarian crisis. The loss of human lives and the targeting of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) are absolutely unacceptable.

Azerbaijan, guided by the principles of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and also by the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes, strongly opposes any form of violence and terror, which are always difficult impediments to dialogue, coexistence and mutual understanding. The history of the Middle East confirms this truth. Violence is counter-productive. It can in no way determine the fate of peoples inhabiting that region. It is unacceptable that the Middle East peace

process was broken off, allowing violence, not reason to prevail; allowing the destructive forces of extremism, not the will of people, striving for peace, to prevail. Azerbaijan welcomes the efforts of mediators to bring about an immediate cessation of hostilities, and urges all parties to the conflict to demonstrate restraint and to sit down at the negotiating table.

Mr. Kim Su Man (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The world is once again witnessing intensive Israeli military action against Lebanon, and is shocked at its barbarity. For several days Israel has been, in disregard of the protest and denunciation of the world, shelling and bombing Lebanon, including Beirut and southern Lebanon, causing human casualties and heavy loss of property. Israel is behaving as if it is resolved to prove that nobody in the world can check its arbitrariness.

The shelling and bombing of Lebanon by the Israeli armed forces is a flagrant violation of the United Nations Charter and relevant United Nations resolutions, international law and the practice of international relations. The Israeli armed attack is a grave infringement on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon and a violation of human rights, which can never be justified.

Israel is intentionally shelling and bombing civilian targets, killing and injuring hundreds of innocent people. And we are astonished at the impudence of Israel when it attempted to find an excuse for its crimes, saying that the shelling of civilian targets was an accident. The world conscience will not overlook the Israelis' inhumane acts of massacre.

We are now watching with deep apprehension tensions escalating in Lebanon in the wake of the continued Israeli military attack. We are very much concerned that it will do harm to the Middle East peace process.

Israel must immediately stop the armed attack and fully respect the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon.

The root cause of conflict in the Middle East is the occupation of Arab territories by Israel. As long as there is Israeli occupation of Arab territories, there will be no guarantee of peace and security in this region. And as long as the root cause exists, new conflicts will break out, because where there is suppression there is resistance, as social science teaches us.

To bring peace to the region, Israel must withdraw immediately from the occupied Arab lands, as demanded by the world community.

Mr. Cassar (Malta): Allow me first to salute the presence of His Excellency Mr. Elias Hraoui, President of the Lebanese Republic, which reflects the gravity of the situation in his country. We listened to his statement with great attention. I would like to convey our condolences to him and to all those who have suffered due to the current hostilities.

Malta associates itself with the statement delivered yesterday by the Permanent Representative of Italy on behalf of the European Union.

This resumed session, held in the wake of the fresh outbreak of violence in the Middle East and the escalation of military activities in northern Israel and Lebanon, reflects the grave concern of the international community.

The United Nations has supported and sustained the peace process in the Middle East. The intensity, extent and escalation of military activity in recent days has shocked us all. It is an escalation of violence and use of force which threatens the security of peoples in the region; an escalation which sows misery and death among innocent civilians and international personnel; an escalation which risks eroding the peace process itself. All military activity which places at risk the security of peoples or the sovereignty of States is to be deplored in the strongest possible terms.

We join others in deploring the suffering inflicted by the bombardments of the civilian populations of Israel and Lebanon and particularly the tragedy at Qana, which cost so many innocent lives. Malta reaffirms its support for the efforts of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in the region and its solidarity with the Fijian peace-keepers. The safety, security and freedom of movement of UNIFIL must be respected to ensure that the United Nations and its agencies play their part in meeting the humanitarian needs of the civilian population. The plight of refugees and displaced persons in the region must also be urgently and adequately addressed.

Difficult as it is when the integrity of the State is placed at risk, it is only through the political will not to be entrapped by provocation, or through a continued exercise of self-restraint, that the parties involved can save themselves from being dragged into a spiral of

violence which multiplies human suffering and erodes the progress of the Middle East process achieved thus far.

Last Sunday, my Deputy Prime Minister stated:

"recent events in the Middle East have shown that the peace process now hangs on a thread".

It is this thread which we must strive to reinforce lest it snap.

The Malta Government is deeply concerned at this recent negative turn of events and believes that hostilities must cease for the peace process to continue. Malta hopes that the path towards a global agreement between Israel and Lebanon in the context of the peace process, an agreement which guarantees Israel's security and preserves Lebanon's sovereignty, will not be undermined by this recent escalation of violence.

All efforts by the international community and the parties themselves which ensure that the peace process is not halted deserve support and encouragement. The peoples of the region, who for so long have shared a common heritage of suffering, have a right not only to hope for peace but to achieve it for themselves, their children and future generations.

Mr. Arzoumanian (Armenia): Armenia has followed with deep concern the resurgence of hostilities in Lebanon, and deplores the suffering inflicted on innocent civilian populations as well as the heavy material losses. It is especially regrettable that this escalation is occurring at a time when significant steps have been taken towards the peaceful resolution of the conflict in the Middle East and results have already been achieved, inspiring hope in the international community that peace and stability will return to that region of the world.

While recognizing the right of every nation to self-defence, Armenia believes that measures taken for that purpose must be commensurate with the existing threats, while serving the cause of a peaceful resolution of the conflict. Armenia adds its voice to that of the international community in calling for an immediate and unconditional end to the hostilities, and further calls on all the parties involved to renounce the use of force, to implement relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular Security Council resolution 425 (1978), and to resume negotiations immediately.

Mr. Yassin (Sudan) (*interpretation from Arabic*): On behalf of the delegation of the Sudan, I wish to welcome His Excellency Mr. Elias Hraoui, President of Lebanon, a sister Arab country, who came to address the General Assembly on an especially important occasion. I commend him for his comprehensive and articulate statement. I wish to take this opportunity to offer His Excellency, the Government and the people of Lebanon our sincere condolences and warm sympathy for the heavy toll of defenceless Lebanese people who have fallen victim to the brutal Israeli military aggression against Lebanon.

The Sudan has consistently maintained its belief that peace in the Middle East must be based on comprehensive justice for all parties of the conflict, including Lebanon. The Sudan has also expressed time and again its firm belief that Security Council resolution 425 (1978) should be implemented as the basis for peace by ensuring full Israeli withdrawal from all Lebanese territory. This, in our view, is similar to Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which are the basis for a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East. All those resolutions are binding on Israel under Article 25 of the Charter.

The dimensions and implications of the Israeli aggression have exceeded even the pretext given by the aggressors themselves. It is totally untenable to accept the arguments advanced to justify such a horrendous, massive aggression, in response to the shelling of a village — a shelling that resulted in the destruction of several houses. The shelling came from positions under occupation, outside the control of the Lebanese authorities. The fact that the aggression reached the Lebanese capital, Beirut, and many other areas away from the line of conflict confirms our suspicions that the motive for the ongoing aggression was political, in the context of domestic electoral campaigns.

Alas, humanitarian considerations were thus totally disregarded. How could one accept the fact that defenceless civilians, economic infrastructure, service facilities and historical heritage sites inside Lebanon became the deliberate targets of revenge for Katyusha attacks on a village in northern Israel? Similarly, how could one accept the fact that Israel targeted a United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) refugee complex sheltering innocent Lebanese women, children and elderly? That resulted in the unspeakable massacre of over a hundred persons.

The United Nations system, especially the Security Council, thus faces a serious test of its ability to uphold the principles of the Charter and implement resolutions. A selective policy involving double standards has convinced Israel that it is immune from implementation of the relevant resolutions; in the final analysis, it has encouraged Israel to pursue its aggression against sister Lebanon, despite the recent adoption of Security Council resolution 1052 (1996). The failure of the Security Council to act at the appropriate time, in response to Lebanon's request, makes the Council responsible for the heavy human toll, the severe human suffering and the substantial physical damage sustained by Lebanon.

The time has come for the Security Council to restore its credibility, in view of its actions that run counter to the provisions of the Charter. Those who survive the massacres in Lebanon will not be able to forgive the Security Council for its failure to fulfil its direct responsibility for saving them from their misery, suffering and losses.

The recourse of Lebanon to the international community, represented by the General Assembly, results from the failure of the Security Council to take the proper action in an effective and timely fashion. It is our hope that the international community, represented by the General Assembly, will fulfil its collective responsibility and put an immediate end to the ongoing aggression, prevail upon Israel to implement United Nations resolutions, especially Security Council resolution 425 (1978), and pay adequate compensation for human losses and the physical damage to Lebanese institutions, historical sites and service facilities. Israel should also halt the shelling of roads between southern Lebanon and Beirut and other areas inside the country, so that humanitarian relief supplies may be delivered to the victims of Israeli aggression in southern Lebanon.

We also call upon the General Assembly to adopt a strong resolution, condemning all those Israeli atrocities. We trust that the General Assembly, as the representative of the whole membership, will give Lebanon what the Security Council failed to deliver.

Mr. Surie (India): The General Assembly is meeting in resumed session at the unanimous request of the Non-Aligned Movement to consider the situation in the Middle East. At the outset, I would like to convey my delegation's deep appreciation to His Excellency the President of Lebanon, for honouring this Assembly with his detailed presentation of the latest developments in his country that have necessitated the holding of this resumed session.

The major strides towards peace in recent years in the Middle East notwithstanding, the tragedy that continues to haunt the region and the world, with the ever-escalating cycle of violence, only underlines the maxim that violence begets violence. It is the innocent, the women, the children, and the future that are put in grave danger.

The Government of India has been carefully following the developments in recent weeks across the international Israel-Lebanon border. It expresses its deep concern at the violence and threats to peace that have escalated over the last few days with the cycle of attacks by Israel on various parts of Lebanon, including Beirut, and rocket attacks across the border from Lebanese territory against Israel. We are deeply distressed at the continuation of hostilities and violence across the border, as also at the increasing number of casualties among innocent civilians which this has caused, particularly in Lebanon.

India strongly deplores the events on 18 April 1996, in which Israeli air attacks on southern Lebanon led to the death of at least 94 Lebanese refugees, including women and children, besides injuring many others. The ghastly tragedy of 18 April once again underscores the need for an immediate end to all hostilities and violence in the region. All parties must exercise the utmost restraint, and in particular avoid attacks on civilian targets under all circumstances.

The Government and the people of India are deeply distressed to know that more than half a million people have had to flee their homes in southern Lebanon and other parts of Lebanon, as a result of the current outbreak of violence and hostilities across the Israel-Lebanon border. We are aware that this has caused innocent civilians much hardship and suffering and has also put a tremendous strain on civic facilities in those parts of Lebanon where the displaced persons are seeking refuge.

As a gesture of sympathy and support to friendly Lebanon in its hour of need, and in response to an appeal from the Government of Lebanon, India has decided to extend humanitarian assistance to that country in the form of items such as medicines, non-perishable food items, blankets and other relief goods. Measures for the urgent

dispatch of these relief supplies have already been initiated.

In conclusion, may I reiterate India's support for Security Council resolution 425 (1978), as also for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity of Lebanon. India calls on all parties concerned to ensure an immediate cessation of all hostilities and violence across the international border between Israel and Lebanon. We also earnestly hope that, following the urgent end of the current cycle of violence, the peace process will be resumed with a view to ensuring lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

Miss Durrant (Jamaica): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 13 members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) that are members of the United Nations: Antigua and Barbuda, the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, and Suriname.

At the outset, the CARICOM countries wish to express their profound regret at the loss of life resulting from the escalation of the armed conflict in Lebanon.

We also wish to express our sincerest sympathy to those members of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) who suffered casualties. We firmly believe that all parties must respect the safety and freedom of UNIFIL and allow it to carry out its mandate.

We call upon all parties to adhere to the resolutions of the Security Council, and we fully support the calls for an immediate cessation of hostilities.

CARICOM countries are particularly concerned at the consequences which the ongoing fighting must have for international peace and security, and at its effect on the peace process in the Middle East. We further emphasize the need for respect for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of all States in the region within their internationally recognized boundaries. The security of all States in the region must be respected by all parties.

CARICOM readily lends its full support to all efforts by individuals or groups attempting to bring a swift but lasting resolution to the present crisis and to provide the basis for a comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East.

The Acting President *(interpretation from French)*: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 477 (V), of 1 November 1950, I now call on the Observer for the League of Arab States.

Mr. Aboul-Nasr (League of Arab States) *(interpretation from Arabic)*: The League of Arab States has followed with great concern the persistent Israeli acts of aggression against Lebanon, which recently escalated, in violation of the principles of international law, the United Nations Charter and relevant resolutions, especially Security Council resolution 425 (1978), thus endangering the peace process begun in Madrid in 1991.

The Council of Ministers of the League of Arab States met in an emergency meeting on 17 April to discuss the current Israeli aggression against Lebanon. The Council adopted resolution 5573, which was circulated as document A/51/118 on the day of its adoption. In that resolution, all the Arab States condemned Israel's aggression against Lebanon and reaffirmed their solidarity with Lebanon. The resolution calls on the United Nations, through the Security Council, to fulfil its responsibility by adopting resolutions to ensure an immediate end to the Israeli aggression and to put a halt to the criminal killing and displacement of Lebanon's civilian population and the physical devastation. It also reiterates the need for the immediate implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978), for Israel's withdrawal from all Lebanese territory and for reparations to reconstruct the destroyed installations, infrastructure and historic sites.

The resolution also reaffirms the right of the Lebanese people to resist the occupation on the basis of the Charter of the United Nations and calls on the international community and Arab and international humanitarian organizations and institutions to help Lebanon, on an emergency basis and by all possible means, to cope with the tragic situation and the destruction caused by that aggression.

I should like to report to the General Assembly on recent developments, which might help to answer certain questions that have been raised, including the need for the Assembly to convene in a resumed session.

The Group of Arab States at the United Nations met on the very day the League of Arab States adopted its resolution. The Group decided to intensify its efforts to urge the Security Council to respond to Lebanon's request that it meet immediately, on Sunday, 14 April. Unfortunately, the Council did not meet until the evening of Monday, 15 April. As a result of the Security

Council's failure immediately to adopt a cease-fire resolution that day, Israel persisted in its criminal acts against civilians, even shelling a United Nations post. This resulted in the Qana massacre on 18 April, which shook the conscience of the world.

The Arab Group met on 18 April and decided once again to ask the Security Council to meet immediately. At the same time, it submitted a draft resolution on behalf of all Arab States that was circulated as document S/1996/292.

Given the uproar of world public opinion, the continued Israeli acts of aggression against civilians and the lack of a Security Council cease-fire resolution, the Council met at long last on 18 April to consider the draft resolution submitted by the Arab States. But, unfortunately, as a result of the manoeuvring and pressure with which we are all familiar, aimed at providing unconditional continued support for Israel in order to score political points in the context of forthcoming elections, the Arab draft resolution did not obtain the required votes for adoption and was replaced by resolution 1052 (1996).

Despite some positive elements, it is the view of the League of Arab States that that resolution is inadequate in support of the inalienable rights of Lebanon. Why do some members of the Security Council object to the implementation of resolution 425 (1978)? Why do they not condemn crimes against innocent civilians? Why has Lebanon's right to compensation not been affirmed? We have a right to raise questions about the standards applied by the Security Council, especially when it is considering matters of concern to the Arab States.

The League of Arab States expresses its full support for the legitimate rights of Lebanon, as articulated yesterday by the President of Lebanon, Mr. Elias Hraoui. The League of Arab States feels that disregard for Lebanon's legitimate rights will result in the escalation of Israel's acts of violence and the intensification of resistance, which is an inherent right in the face of occupation.

The peace process begun in Madrid in 1991, which was supported by the League of Arab States in its resolution 5092 of September 1991, is being severely strained and even threatened. This is a result not only of Israel's brutal practices against Lebanon, but also of its intransigent refusal to withdraw from the Syrian Golan and its siege of the Palestinians. The Secretary-General of the League of Arab States said in a statement to the League's Council that the international community must acknowledge public opinion throughout the Arab world and that the peace sought by Israel would not be achieved through its current practices.

From this rostrum, the League of Arab States wishes to underscore the following facts.

First, the Israeli aggression against Lebanon has gone beyond every limit that we thought to have been established by the peace process and returned the region to the atmosphere of war that we thought had ended.

Secondly, this aggression, used as a smokescreen by Israel, will achieve none of its goals. On the contrary, it could lead to dire consequences. The use of force can only exacerbate the deteriorating situation.

Thirdly, the aggression raises a serious question at this critical juncture. Does Israel need peace on the agreed bases or does it want to impose its own concept of peace based on the use of force, imbalance and the creation of constant tension?

In closing, I wish on behalf of the League of Arab States to place on record that we came to the Assembly in the hope that the Assembly would see to it that justice was upheld. We expect from the Assembly an explicit and direct resolution condemning the Israeli aggression, forcing the aggressor to bring it to a halt and requiring Israel to implement resolution 425 (1978), which calls for its immediate and unconditional withdrawal from Lebanese territory. It should also stress Lebanon's right to compensation for the damage it has sustained. We hope that the Assembly will support peace based on justice and the relevant United Nations resolutions. We call for the prevalence of justice, the only path to peace, which is not to be reached on the bloody track being followed by Israel today.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.